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RENUNCIATION AND MEDITATION

Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
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T. L. VASWANI

EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

RENUNCIATION AND MEDITATION

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MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

Beloved India! Her ideals are beautiful ones.

How fortunate you are to contact the great mystic, Vaswani! A sweet soul he truly is. I hope some day to meet him and know him as you do.

He speaks of his heart being sad from seeing so much suffering and misery in the world. If every one could feel as he does about it, much of the woe would vanish and in its place come brotherly love and a great tenderness for all God's creation.

I myself am keenly receptive of the sufferings of all creatures. No one knows what I have suffered seeing even the dumb brute being abused and neglected. How it pains me to see an animal ill-treated!

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I have just received your brochure on "The Path of Action" as outlined in the Gita, and I consider that this handbook, like the other items released in the "Series," is most illuminating and instructive.

I always make it a point to peruse your writings as and when they reach me.

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It has been a great pleasure to receive your magazine each month, and I am particularly enjoying the Series on the Bhagavad Gita.

I think you are doing a great work with your publications, and I am sure the Lord is blessing you to carry on, for the benefit of all those who derive inspiration and help from each issue.

I. J. Henry
New Zealand

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INTRODUCTION

This is number 4 of the series named, *Gita : an Outline.* This number is a summary-survey of chapters 5 and 6 of the Gita. In this number an attempt is made to indicate the essence of "meditation" and true "renunciation" (*sanyasa*), in their relation to the problems and perplexities of life.

The earlier section in the Gita, outlined in chapter I of the Gita, bears upon what the Gita calls *vishada.* Arjuna is asked to rise above *vishada.* But let it not be forgotten that *vishada* or sorrow, also, has its place in human evolution. *Vishada* must not govern life. *Vishada* must be conquered: and *vishada* conquered gives a new radiance to life.

Arjuna is in deep *vishada*, deep anguish. Yet, let us not forget that anguish purifies. And purification is a necessary stage in life's evolution. Purification is a necessary stage, preliminary to illumination,—the illumination of the heart. So it is that *vishada* has its purpose in man's evolution. And chapter I on *vishada* is necessarily connected with the other chapters on meditation and renunciation.

What is the purpose of *vishada* in the onward march of the soul ? Lonely must thou be, O seeker ! The soul would not attain to the rainbow-stage of evolution, if the eyes would have no tears. As the broken earth drinks in rain, so the broken heart drinks in the true wisdom of life. Arjuna's heart must break in some grief, before it can receive the illumination of the Spirit. In brief, when the heart breaks, the "ego," the "I," is annihilated. The wisdom of God shines in the impersonal. Arjuna is not yet become impersonal. He goes forth to the Kurukshetra to fight. He would fight with the valour of a *kshatrya.* But he is entangled in the "I," therefore, in *moha.*

Arjuna confounds his *moha* with love. Sri Krishna corrects Arjuna. Arjuna says he will not fight, for he loves his relatives. Sri Krishna points out :—Arjuna ! you do not fight in the spirit in which you should, because you have *moha* for your relatives and preceptors. True love, remember, Arjuna ! never shrinks from duty, however unpleasant the duty be. Not without reason did the great English poet, Tennyson, speak of "the strong son of God, Immortal Love." Love is strong, in purpose and action. Love is not weak sentimentalism. Arjuna, alas ! is become a weak sentimentalist when he turns away from his duty.

The way out of *moha*, sentimental attachment, is *reflection*. "Let us reason together, O Arjuna !" says Krishna. The Gita, it cannot be too much emphasised, is a scripture of reflection. The great Jewish seer said :—"Let us reason together !" Sri Krishna voices the same sentiment. Religion degenerated in the day in which it discarded reason and became blind belief. There is no conflict between religion and science. Religion is science,—of the Spirit. You are not truly religious until you reflect, think, reason, meditate on the great mystery of life and the universe.

So the second chapter of the Gita is named Sankhya. That word means reflection, thought. Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to think, to reflect, to reason with him. A true teacher will not be angry with his pupils for their questions and doubts. A true teacher is patient with his pupils.

On the battle-field, just when the bugle is sounded to begin the fight, Arjuna lays down his weapons and sits depressed in the chariot, saying :—"I shall not fight !" Krishna, the model teacher, is not annoyed. He smiles and then says to his pupil :—"Arjuna ! come, let us reason together." And Sri Krishna listens patiently to Arjuna as he indicates his doubts and difficulties.

In answer to them, Krishna gives a philosophical analysis

of the nature of man. What is man ? What is his constitution ? Where is his homeland ? Where is the Spirit of man ? Why cometh he to this earth-plane from the Eternal ? It is a time-space world.

Krishna's answers to these questions are the basis of the second chapter of the Gita. In this chapter are given illuminating answers to the questions which man has put to the universe, age after age. Krishna indicates to Arjuna to take up the challenge of life and meet its doubts and difficulties, showing how one may, step by step, rise to an understanding of oneself.

Krishna indicates what his Self, real Self is, and what is his perishable environment. Sri Krishna indicates how, step by step, Arjuna may rise to the illumination of the Spirit and so to a new vision of his divine destiny.

In Sri Krishna's words to Arjuna there is courage that speaks to Arjuna,—courage blended with compassion. "Know yourself, O Arjuna!" says Sri Krishna. And knowing what your true Self is, you will have the strength to stand up to your fate.

Remember, Arjuna ! you are not your physical mechanism, the body. You are not a machine. Infinite forces are locked up within you. Passions and appetites are in you. But they are not a part of you. They are alien to your real Self,—the *Atman*. Your weaknesses are not a part of you,—the real Self. Even your virtues are not a part of you,—the real *Atman*. Your virtues are summoned by the vanity within you. Above your weaknesses and above your virtues must you rise, if you would attain to the real Self within you, the Highest that you are. Above all *dwandas*, all pairs of opposites is your real Self, the *Atman*. And above all pairs of opposites must you rise, if you would live the true life which is the life of spontaneity and self-realisation.

The way of self-realisation is the way of (I) reflection which, in its unfolding, becomes meditation, and (2) renunciation which is not outer abandonment of life. True renunciation is detachment or abandonment of *moha*. The message of the Gita is essentially one of *shakti*. The Gita is a song,—a song of life, a song of action, but action which is detached, dedicated, action which springs from creative life. The message of the Gita is one of conquest, a message of heroic spirituality. Quietism is not the doctrine of the Gita. Life has a meaning, and life is a battle-field of values. And thy sanctuary, brother ! is on the battle-field. March on ! Don't beat retreat ! "The sanctuary is before thee," says a sage of Iran. "And the robber is behind thee. If thou goest on, thou wilt, one day, attain ! If thou sleepest, thou wilt die !"

The call of Sri Krishna is a call to the battle-field. India fell in the day she rejected this great message of action, of purified, dedicated, heroic, spiritual action. India's need, today, is, also, the message of a culture of spiritualised action, the culture of the Courage to stand up and the Will-to-win! This culture is the measure of manhood. It is the measure of civilisation.

The Gita, therefore, calls us to a life which is neither inaction nor the foolish pursuit of gains and prominence, what the world calls "greatness." If thou wilt serve the Kingdom of the *Atman*, the Gita urges, thou must not lose thyself in the game of greatness. In loneliness is thy strength. So freed from the tyranny of the outer, the tyranny of desires, of pride and self, and growing in reflection, in meditation and prayer, thou wilt unfold thy inner powers in service and sacrifice.

Be and not seem, methinks, is the inner core of the teaching of the Gita. And the secret of true Being, the secret of communion with Being, is true renunciation, inner

renunciation. The way to the perfect life is to be a zero. Nothingness is the way to perfection.

How to attain to this stage of "nothingness"? Everyday try to be little. "Renounce ! Renounce !" says Goethe. Renounce prominence and power and position. Renounce thy ego, the "I." Cease to be, if thou wilt attain to true Being. Think of what the rain-bird does. In utter loneliness it calleth, it calleth. And longing, it looks for a few drops of rain. So feeling lonely, stand up ! Look at the candle and say :—"Beloved ! like unto this candle I would be. I burn, though the night is over. Look on me with Thy gaze of compassion and blow out Thy breath that I may cease to be. And becoming naught, I may be extinguished in Thee, Beloved !"

In this great doctrine of the zero is the meeting-point, to my mind, of the teaching of the Gita and the higher Sufi thought and the wisdom of the Buddha, his doctrine of "*nirvana.*" Nations, today, cry for freedom. But what they really fight for is bondage to "desire," to ambition, to power and greatness of the earth. True freedom, the nations have yet to understand, is indifference to results, to what the Gita calls "fruits" of action. True freedom is service, is *saranam*, is service of the Will Divine.

T. L. VASWANI

THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION

[1]

Sri Krishna has so far spoken at once of *karma yoga* and of *sanyasa yoga*. *Karma yoga* is *karma* performed as *yoga*. *Karma yoga* is action which is dedicated. *Sanyasa yoga* is the *yoga* which is attained through *sanyasa* or renunciation. So it is that Arjuna has a doubt again. And he frankly puts it before the Master.

Krishna has spoken of *sankhya* and *yoga*, of *gnana* and *karma*, of knowledge and work. And between the two Arjuna sees an insuperable contradiction. For the *sankhya* doctrine of knowledge advocates renunciation of action, and the *yoga* doctrine advocates right performance of action. Yet Krishna says that both are good, that both the paths (*gnana* and *karma*) lead man to the highest state.

Arjuna is not satisfied. He wants definite guidance as to what he should do. Should Arjuna renounce his *karma* as a warrior and follow the line of *sanyasa* (as taught by *sankhya*)? Or should he do his *karma* as a *kshatrya* and carry the fight to a finish (as taught by *yoga*) ? Which of the two,—renunciation and work,—should Arjuna follow ?

Surely, the belief among many Hindus was that through *sanyasa* could one attain to liberation. If so, Arjuna's *kshatrya*-work should stand in the way of his liberation. In which case, Arjuna is prepared to give up his work as a *kshatrya*, and practise renunciation as a *sanyasin*. Arjuna wants to know definitely what he should do.

> Renunciation of actions (*sanyasa*) thou praisest, O Krishna ! and, also, the right performance of action

(*yoga*). Of the two, (*sanyasa* and action), which one is the better ? That tell me conclusively. [V. 1]

Krishna does not wish to encourage Arjuna to blindly accept any view. Krishna understands that Arjuna has the weakness which so many have to regard renunciation as superior to work. So Krishna thinks it best to explain to Arjuna what real *sanyasa* (renunciation) is, and thus to help Arjuna to make his own choice.

[2]

(1) Know then this, O Arjuna ! that *karma-yoga* (works) and *sanyasa-yoga* (renunciation) are not contraries leading to different goals. *Karma* or work and *sankhya* (knowledge) or renunciation both are means to liberation.

The value of work is not in its results but in the spirit in which it is done,—the right spirit being that which offers work as an incense to the Eternal. Only so may work purify the worker and become a self-discipline in the process of self-unfoldment.

Work has its value in the measure in which it expresses spiritual life, the life of the *Atman*. Such work, itself, is *sanyasa*, renunciation : for the worker, the *yogi*, has renounced all thought of result or fruits of action.

(2) *Karma*, done in the spirit of *yoga*, is detached : and *sanyasa* (renunciation) really means non-attachment, absence of *raga* and *dwesha*, of selfish love and hate. The man who does *karma* as a *yoga*, the *karma-yogin*, the true *yogi*, acts, but he neither seeks nor rejects objects. He rises above *dwandas* (pairs of opposites), likes and dislikes, etc. He neither seeks nor rejects : he is desireless. So *karma* has no bonds for him : he has broken the bonds which tie one to the world : and such an one is the true *sanyasin*. The *yogi*, the *karma-yogi*, is a *sanyasin*.

> Children, not sages, speak of *sankhya* and *yoga* as different : he who is established in one, obtains the fruits of both.
>
> The supreme state which is gained by the *sankhyas* is reached by the *yogis*, also. He seeth who seeth that the *sankhya* and the *yoga* are one. [V. 4, 5]

(3) A *karma* (action) becomes a cause leading to another *karma* (action), which is its effect, and so is created a chain of causation which drags us to births and deaths. But it is not *karma* (action) *per se*, in itself, which creates the chain of causation. The chain is created really by *raga* and *dwesha*, false love and hatred.

Work, in itself, does not bind : it is *trishna* (desire) which binds. Learn to work without any *trishna*, any attachment to the fruit, and you will not be subject to the cycle of causation. Far from being a source of bondage, such work, *karma*, offered as a *yagna*, sacrifice to the Lord, will be a step to self-realisation. Desireless action does not bind.

The man who is *yoga-yukta*, "harmonised by *yoga*," is the man of purified heart and controlled body and restrained senses. His only self is the Self of all creatures. Such a man is unaffected by action.

> He who is harmonised by *yoga*, the self-purified, self-ruled, the sense subdued, whose self is the Self of all beings, although acting, he is not affected. [V. 7]

(4) Why is he not affected by action? Because he acts not for himself. The *Atman*, the higher Self,—the Krishna within him,—is the performer of his actions.

He, the individual man, has renounced all action of his own volition. He hath, through *sankhya*, knowledge and meditation, slain the organs and senses. He hath destroyed the functions of action in himself. His body and mind and

buddhi are set in motion not by himself but by the energy of Krishna within him.

He sees, he hears, he touches, he smells, he eats, he moves, he sleeps, he breathes, he speaks : but he understands that this is so because motions of the senses and organs are directed by natural impulse to their appropriate objects. He knows the divine truth that he is doing nothing. Krishna does all actions in him.

> "I do not anything," thinks the *yoga-yukta* (the harmonised one). Such a man knows the secret (*tatvavit*). Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing eyes, he understands that the senses move among the objects of the senses. [V. 8, 9]

(5) Such a man is "unaffected by sin as is a lotus leaf by the waters" [V. 10]. Pure in heart, he does actions with his body, his mind, his reason (*buddhi*), with an entire oblivion and absence of motive, self-interest, desire. His actions are of the purest character, the most perfect in quality. For he is, practically, an instrument of an Interior Force prompting and actuating his actions,—a Force emanating from Krishna within.

(6) Such a man attains to the eternal Peace. He dwells serenely in the nine-gated city, *nava-dware puri*, the body, which is a city of the Eternal. He dwells serenely, for he neither acts, nor causes to act. He has obtained tranquillity. He may well enter the *Para-nirvana*,—the Peace wherein abide the liberated ones beyond this life. But he remains in this body, in the city of the nine senses for the benefit of mankind. He remains here a *jiwan-mukta*, a Master to bless and teach and illuminate the lives of *jignasus*, the seekers of the light.

The *yoga-yukta* (harmonised man) attaineth to the eternal Peace.

Renouncing all actions, mentally, he resteth serenely in the nine-gated city. He is the sovereign dweller in the body. And he neither acteth nor doth he cause to act. [V. 12, 13]

Such a blessed one is the true *sanyasin.* In small things as in great, he trusts in God, he relies on God, he gives all his actions to God, and so is not worried about his fate in this world or any other world. He does not worry himself even about his *mukti* (liberation). He knows that, in the Providence of the Lord who is too wise to err, too loving to forget, there is *mukti* for all. He has attained to *yogic* peace. He is free!

[3]

Krishna within is the prompter of the actions of his devoted disciple,—the *yogi,* who becomes an instrument of the Lord : but Krishna is not the creator of actions nor of its fruits. Actions and their fruits are manifestations of nature, *swabhava:* its three *gunas* (qualities) are *sattva, rajas* and *tamas.* From these three spring actions.

The *yogi* of wisdom, the free man, is a man of true *sanyasa* or renunciation. He hath renounced actions. He hath transcended the three *gunas.* He stands above nature. He has surrendered himself to the *Atman,* the Krishna within him.

The *yogi* acts not. What appear to be his actions are really manifestations of the Krishna-energy within him.

Neither *papa* (sin) nor *sukrita* (virtue) goeth unto the Lord. He accepts him who rises above vice and virtue, and goes to the Lord in absolute self-surrender (*saranam*

gachchami). The *yogi*, the man of true renunciation, is the man of self-surrender.

But the vast majority of men, not treading the path of true *yoga*, are under the influence of *agnana* (unwisdom). Truth is for them beclouded by ignorance, tainted by the flesh. So are they led astray, and they fall in the snare of delusion.

> The Lord of the world (*Prabhu*) produced not the idea of agency (*kartritnam*), nor of actions (*karma*), nor of the union (*sanyoga*) of action and its fruit (*karma-phala*). Nature (*swabhava*), verily, manifesteth.
>
> And the Lord accepts neither evil-doing (*papam*) nor yet the virtue (*sukritam*) of any. But wisdom is enveloped (*avritam*) by unwisdom: so are mortals deluded!
>
> [V. 14, 15]

[4]

Blessed are they who walk not the way of the majority. Blessed are they who attain to wisdom, knowledge of the *Atman*, the true Self, Krishna within. They are the *yogis*. As the light of the sun disperses darkness and reveals the beauty of the world, so does the light of wisdom (*gnana*) disperse all ignorance and reveal the Supreme to the true *yogi*.

Such true *yogis*,—men of true *sanyasa*, sons of the Light, sages of illumination,—live and move in the Supreme (*Tat-param*). They think on That, and are devoted to That. And when they leave this mortal body, they go to the Abode whence there is no return to this wheel of birth and death.

Such sages are free from all preferences, prejudices and predilections. They are *sama darshi*: they see the One Self (*Atman*) in a cow, an elephant and a dog,—the One

Krishna in a selfless *brahmin* and an outcast who eats the flesh of dogs. Such sages have equal or balanced consciousness. And they rest in the Eternal (*Brahman*) who is the *samam* (balanced).

Such *yogis* rejoice not over pleasant things (*priyam*) nor grieve over the unpleasant (*apriyam*). All their joy is in the Self, the *Atman*, in the divine union with the Krishna within. Not in the delights arising from the attraction of the senses or contact with external objects, not in these ephemeral and impermanent enjoyments is their joy. They know that the things of the earth are wombs of pain (*dukha yonaya*), for they have a beginning and an ending (*adi-anta*). Knowing this, they fight and conquer the force of desire and passion (*kama-krodha*). They conquer by self-surrender. They give the reins of the three horses, the three *gunas*, in the hands of Krishna. They seek joy within (*antaha sukha*) : they rejoice within (*antara-ramah*). They are interiorly illumined. They rise above the three *gunas* of nature and partake of super-nature, the divine nature of the Supreme. They become of the Eternal (*Brahmabhutah*). They are assimilated with the Supreme. And the time they stay in this body upon the earth they are devoted to welfare of all beings (*sarva bhutahite ratah*).

> Verily, in whom unwisdom is destroyed by the wisdom of the *Atman*, in them wisdom, shining as the sun, reveals the Supreme.
>
> Thinking on That, merged in That, solely devoted to That, they go whence there is no return.
>
> Such sages look equally on a *brahmin* adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a *shvapaka*, outcast.
>
> Even here on earth, with their mind balanced, they are established in the Eternal Brahman who is balanced.
>
> [V. 16-19]

> He who is happy within, who rejoiceth within, who is illuminated within, that *yogi*, becoming Brahman (the Eternal), goes to the Peace of the Eternal (*Brahma-nirvana*). [V. 24]

To everyone who knoweth his Self (*Atman*), cometh the benediction of the Peace of the Eternal (*Brahma-nirvanam*). For this knowledge is wisdom. It drives out desire and passion. It makes a man subdued in nature and of subdued thoughts.

The process of subdual is helped on by *pranayama*, breath-control. He who would practise *pranayama* is asked:—

(1) to exclude external contacts;

(2) to fix his gaze between the eye-brows; and

(3) to make equal the outgoing and ingoing breaths (*prana* and *apana*) moving within the nostrils.

But the essential thing is to liberate the senses, mind and *buddhi* (reason) from the dominion of desires and to set free his nature from fear and passion.

Above all, he must know Krishna as the Assimilator of all *yagna* and *tapas* (sacrifice and austerity), and as the Lord of all the worlds (*sarva-loka*) and the Lover of all the beings.

He, then, who knoweth the *Atman* (higher Self) and, through the *Atman*, masters the lower self of senses, mind and reason, he goeth to Peace. He is eternally blessed!

> With senses, mind and reason ever controlled, solely pursuing liberation (*mokshaparayanah*), the sage (*muni*), having for ever cast away desire, fear and passion, verily is liberated.
>
> Having known Me as the Assimilator (*bhokta*) of sacrifice and of austerity, as the Ruler of all the worlds and the Lover of all beings, he goeth to peace (*shanti*). [V. 28, 29]

THE PATH OF MEDITATION

[1]

(1) Krishna re-emphasises the truth that true *sanyasa* or renunciation is *yoga*.

And *sanyasa* or renunciation is not in this, that the *sanyasi* lights no sacrificial fire (*agni*) and performs no ceremonies (*akriyaha*). Renunciation or *sanyasa* is in this, that the man, in all his actions (*karma*), gives up the desire for fruit of action (*karma-phala*). *Sanyasa* is non-attachment: *sanyasa* is desirelessness.

And this, too, is *sanyasa* or renunciation,—the giving up of *sankalpa* (planning for the future, building up castles in imagination).

This *sanyasa* calls for practice of action. Action without desire for fruit is, indeed, a means to the beginning in *yoga*, as to him who is established in *yoga* (*yoga-rudhah*), serenity(*shamah*) is the means : and serenity comes through abandonment of *sankalpa*. We plan and disturb the inner peace of the heart.

He who is enthroned in *yoga* (*yoga-rudhah*), renounces *sankalpa* and abides in meditation (*dhyana*).

He that acts independently of the fruit of action, he is a true *sanyasi*: not he who lights no sacrificial fire and performs no ceremonies.

Verily, true renuciation is *yoga*, O Arjuna ! And he is not a true *yogi* who hath not renounced *sankalpa*.

For a sage who is seeking *yoga*, action is the means: for him who is enthroned in *yoga*, serenity is the means.

Renouncing *sankalpa*, the sage is said to be enthroned in *yoga*. [VI. 1-4]

(2) Meditation is reaching the higher Self, the *Atman*. You reach the *Atman* after the lower self is curbed. The lower self is desire-dominated. This desire-self must be restrained by the *Atman*, the higher Self. So may one be raised above the sense-life to meditation or life in God, the *Atman*.

To him who has conquered himself and risen to meditation, the *Átman*,—the higher Self,—is the friend. But to him who is not self-conquered, his worst foe is the self of desires.

> Verily is the Self the friend of the self : and also the Self is the self's enemy.
>
> The Self is the friend of the self of him in whom the self by the Self is vanquished. But to the unsubdued self, the Self, verily, is hostile as an enemy. [VI. 5, 6]

The *yogi* of meditation subdues his senses: he is rock-seated (*kutastha*) i. e., unwavering, and he is equal-minded in "cold and heat," "pleasure and pain," "honour and dishonour," "all pairs of opposites." And a lump of earth and a stone and gold are to him the same. He looks with the same *buddhi* (*samabuddhi*), i. e., impartiality upon all, friends and foes, strangers and neutrals, foreigners and relatives, the righteous and unrighteous.

[2]

The *yogi* of meditation rests in the Supreme. Therefore,

(i) he goes, again and again, in solitude and seclusion.

(ii) He makes a seat for himself in a pure place. His seat is neither very much raised nor very low. The seat is made of a cloth, a black antelope skin and *kusha*-grass, one over the other.

(iii) He sits steady on his seat and tries to make the

mind one-pointed: he aims at self-purification.

(iv) He holds the body, head and neck erect, steady, immovable. He looks fixedly at the point of the nose (*nasikagram*).

(v) He is firm in the vow of the *brahmachari*, the vow of purity and continence.

(vi) He thinks on Krishna and aspires after Krishna.

(2) Discipline of body and the senses is necessary to the *yoga* of meditation. This discipline is based on the law of moderation. The *yogi's* is the middle path.

There are people who do not walk the middle path. They think the *yogi* should be able to live without food, to rise in the air, to fly through space, to be proof against poisons. The true *yogi*, however, does not seek the supernatural powers: for he knows that the body will still be perishable. He knows that true power, *shakti*, *siddhi*, is of the soul. The *yogi* is not a magician and he does not seek miraculous feats.

He who would attain to meditation must walk the middle path. He must not be immoderate in food or fasting, in sleep or vigil. He must eat neither too much nor too little: he must sleep neither too much nor too little. He regulates eating and sleeping, walking and working. He disciplines his appetites and does not deplete himself by excess or self-mortification. He is a man of divine discipline and so takes the mean between indulgence and asceticism. He maintains moderation in eating and recreation, in sleeping and waking, in exertions of actions, in speech and silence, in labour and rest. His day-to-day life shows the absence of excitement and nervousness, of indiscretion and idle talk, of indulgence and self-torture. He knows no excess in action.

The man of meditation attains to self-restraint and so knows no pain produced by actions of the uncontrolled,—

pain due to restlessness, discontent, self-reproach, grief, anger and fear.

> Verily, *yoga* is not for him who eateth too much, nor for him who abstaineth to excess: *yoga* is not for him who is too much addicted to sleep, nor even for him who is addicted to wakefulness, O Arjuna!
>
> *Yoga* killeth out pain (*yogo bhavati dukhaha*) for him who is regulated in eating and amusement, in activity, in sleeping and waking. [IV. 16,17]

(3) Discipline of the mind is, also, necessary to the *yoga* of meditation.

Such a *yogi* is centred in the Self. He is free from attachment to desire. He is at rest. He is as the flame of a lamp which is sheltered from the wind in a windless place and flickereth not. The flame is not extinguished but steadied. So the *yogi* does not suppress all thoughts: he thinks of God!

By the practice of this *yoga* of meditation he attains rest, assimilating himself with the higher Self. Thus does he attain to the bliss which is boundless. Nothing disturbs this bliss : for nothing moves him. He is not shaken even by heavy sorrow. The *yogi* does not kill all joy: he has his joy unending in God, and in God or *Atman* has the joy of divine peace.

> As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the *yogi* of subdued thought, absorbed in the *yoga* of the *Atman*. [VI. 19]

(4) Thus having subdued the senses and organs, having extinguished desire, having slain all *sankalpa*, the *yogi* of meditation is at rest in the *Atman*, the higher Self, the true Self, the Krishna within. He is in union with the Supreme.

He seeth the unity of all things. He sees Krishna in all things and all things in Krishna. And, knowing this

spiritual unity, he worshippeth Krishna and he liveth in Krishna, whatsoever his outer condition be. He seeth the One Self shining in the heart of each, One Essence in all things. He sees that the Original Form of all beings and creatures is in the likeness (*upama*) of the *Atman*, notwithstanding all pain and evil that seem so incongruous in a world of which the hidden Essence is He, Krishna!

Herein lies the secret of love, patience, endurance and all the virtues and qualities of wisdom which the *yogi* has developed in himself through assimilation with the Krishna, the Centre of his being. All that comes to him, *sukkha* or *dukkha*, is the same to him. He accepts it all with equanimity. In *sukkha* and *dukkha* he seeth equality (*samam*).

Such a state is *samadhi*, a state of perpetual divine presence, divine life, and divine peace. It is the highest state.

[3]

(1) Krishna's picture of the man of meditation who lives in a state of perpetual divine presence is so beautiful, so finished, so perfect, that Arjuna despairs of it. Such a man is so self-restrained, so senseless of suffering that he has total absence of the ordinary natural human qualities such as resentment, anger, sense of injury. Such a man has such self-composure that he is not startled even by sudden disasters, injuries, personal attacks, persecutions, adversity. Such a state Arjuna thinks he cannot attain.

Arjuna asks:—"Master! the *yoga* of meditation thou hast declared to be the *yoga* of equanimity (*sama yoga*). I do not see that I can ever attain to this *yoga*; for I find that the mind is restless, full of agitation, turbulent, strong and obstinate. To restrain it is as difficult as to curb the storm (*vayu*)."

This *yoga* which thou hast declared to be by equanimity, O Krishna! I see not a stable foundation for it, owing to restlessness.

For the mind is verily restless, O Krishna! It is impetuous, strong and difficult to bend. I deem it hard to curb the mind as the wind. [VI. 33, 34]

(2) Krishna replies that the mind truly is restless and hard to restrain.

But it may be restrained and the *yoga* of meditation attained by two disciplines:—

(i) *abhyasa*, constant practice; and

(ii) *vairagya*, dispassion, detachment, desirelessness.

This double divine discipline will break down and destroy the lower self,—to which belongs the mind. Difficult is this discipline: but it is attainable by him who controls himself through properly directed energy.

(3) Arjuna has a feeling that in most men such perfect control or self-restraint would take far longer than the span of one life-time. So he asks:—What is the fate of a man who has faith (*shradha*) but has not perfect control? His mind, being unsubdued, wanders away from *yoga* and fails to attain to perfection (*yoga samadhi*). He can but partially practise *yoga*. What becomes of him? Is he, like a broken cloud, doomed to destruction? He has *shradha*, faith, in the Path of the Eternal (*Brahmanah pathi*): but he has stumbled, again and again, into snares of delusion, and he quits the mortal life still in an imperfect state. Does such a man perish?

(4) To Arjuna, Krishna gives an answer which fills us with hope.

(i) Such a man does not perish here or hereafter. Whatever progress is made is never lost. And he who does good never treads the path of woe (*durgatim*).

(ii) He who takes the Path, even though weakly and with frequent falls, yet ever persevering and bringing, again and again, his inconstant mind to the Lord, on quitting the mortal life before reaching the end of the Path, passes through the middle region (astral plane), until he is qualified to rise to Heaven (*Devachan*), or if he is qualified for Heaven in the moment of his death, he goes straight to Heaven,—the "worlds of pure-doing" (*punya kritam-loka*).

Heaven or *Devachan* is a collective term for the many worlds of pure-doing. "In my Father's House are many mansions," said Isa. In one of these "mansions" in the *Devachan*, the *jignasu* dwells for an immensity of years, immemorial years (*shash-vateeh samah*).

(iii) When these years are over, he, the *yoga-bhrishta*, the man fallen from *yoga*, is born again in a pure and blessed house, it may be in a family of *yogis* (*yoginameva kuli*) a family of the spiritually illuminated.

(iv) Under such conditions of re-birth he finds correspondences in his environment to the knowledge attained by him in his former body. These correspondences of environment help him to recover characteristics belonging to his former body (*paurvadehikam*). His past life's *abhyasa* (practice) is thus awakened. He is led on in his destiny. He reaches the supreme goal (*paramgatim*). This Goal goes beyond the Brahmic world (*Sabda Brahma*),—the world of which the students of the letter of *Vedas* speak.

Thus whatever progress is made in this life by the *yoga-bhrishta* is never lost. His efforts are taken from life to life and world to world, until he reaches the Supreme. The gain once made by him is ever his,—a part of his eternal life.

(v) The *yogi* of meditation may take long to tread the

Path. His labours may continue through many births. He may become a *yoga-bhrishta*. But he attains, at last, to the Eternal.

The ascetic (*tapasvi*) or anchorite inflicts severe penances on his body: but greater than the *tapasvi* is the *yogi* of meditation.

The knower of the *Vedas* (*gnani*) is great, indeed : but greater still is the *yogi* of meditation.

The *karmi*, the man of activity, too, is great: but greater than he is the true *yogi* of meditation.

Tapasya, knowledge of the *Vedas*, and activity are all aids to spiritual unfolding : but all the three find their fulfilment in the *yogi* of meditation, who lives perpetually in the divine presence. He beholds Krishna within himself and adores the Lord in all. Such a *yogi* sees the Light of the *Atman* in his own heart and in the face of all creatures, all beings. Be thou such a *yogi*, an illumined one, O Arjuna!

> The *yogi* is greater than the *tapasvi* (ascetic): the *yogi* is greater even than the Vedic scholar: the *yogi* is greater than the *karmi* (man of activity). Therefore, become thou a *yogi*, O Arjuna!
>
> And among all *yogis*, he who, full of faith, with the innermost heart fixed on Me, adoreth Me,—he is deemed by Me to be the most completely harmonised (*yuktamah*), the most devoted. [VI. 46, 47]

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